

Massachusetts **Recovery High Schools**

Mission Statement

To reduce the high rates of relapse associated with teens in recovery by providing a safe, sober and supportive school environment where students and their recovery efforts are understood, valued and fostered.

Overview

Recovery High Schools are four year, non-traditional public high schools that will serve approximately 30-50 students, all who have been diagnosed with a substance abuse or dependence disorder. Students must have successfully completed a primary phase of treatment and be committed to a program of recovery prior as a condition of admission. All students and parents must be willing to sign a behavioral contract prior to admission which outlines the following expectations for admission:

- 1. Students must be sober upon admission (minimum 30 days) and willing to submit to admission and "just cause" urine screens to determine relapse.*
- 2. Students must be committed to an individual program of recovery which includes identification of a sponsor and participation in at least two 12 step meetings per week.*
- 3. Students who continually relapse will be subject to expulsion.*

The schools provide a comprehensive academic curriculum that is consistent with Massachusetts State Standards, MCAS testing protocols and course requirements of their respective sending school districts. All of the schools have the capacity to serve students who have IEP's.

They will actively support students in their recovery by providing smaller class sizes (approximate 7:1 student/teacher ratio), individualized attention, licensed counseling services and daily group meetings where students will have the opportunity to process issues related to both education and recovery. The schools will strongly encourage and provide opportunity for parent involvement as this has been identified as a key element in an individuals recovery.

The concept of Recovery high schools originated in Minnesota, in 1989, as a response to the high rates of relapse among adolescents who returned from a

treatment experience to a traditional high school. The schools have been found to be a tremendous success in both reducing rates of relapse and increasing rates of graduation. The school's average daily attendance rate for 2001 was over 90 percent and in that same year 95 percent of the seniors graduated with an average matriculation rate of 76 percent. During that same year, 100 percent of students attending the school passed the Minnesota Basic Standards exam, giving the school the highest cumulative three-year average of any school in Minnesota.

Recovery high schools are currently in operation in 8 states and at 24 locations across the country.

The Massachusetts schools are located in Boston, Beverly and Springfield and are jointly funded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and local school districts. Each of the schools utilizes a slightly different operational model; the Springfield site is operated solely by the Springfield Public Schools, Boston utilizes a partnership between the Boston Public Schools and a non-profit social service agency, Action for Boston Community Development, while Beverly is operated by an educational entity, the Northshore Educational Consortium, that comprises 17 towns and cities on the Northshore.

The schools are utilizing several referral sources to identify appropriate candidates for admission including, but not limited to:

- ☒ *Adolescent Residential treatment providers*
- ☒ *Adolescent outpatient treatment providers*
- ☒ *Public Schools*
- ☒ *Department of Youth Services and vendors.*
- ☒ *Department of Social Services and vendors.*
- ☒ *Juvenile Courts*
- ☒ *Other area school systems*
- ☒ *Parents*
- ☒ *Students*

Referrals must be supported by the student's local school district and are subject to a review of academic records and/or treatment records as well as an in-person interview with Recovery School personnel.

The schools are currently seeking sponsorship and in need of computers, office equipment, books and classroom supplies, office supplies, recovery

materials, staff training and development, school event sponsorship and audio-visual equipment.

For individuals interested in learning more or referring students to one of the Recovery Schools please utilize the contact information as listed below:

William J. Ostiguy High School - Boston

19 Temple Place

Roger Oser - Director

Boston, MA 02111

617-348-6070 x 7530

www.abcd.org

Northshore Recovery High School

502 Cabot St.

Beverly, MA 01915

Michelle Lipinski - Director

978-922-3305

www.nsedu.org

Springfield Recovery High School

334 Franklin St.

Springfield, MA 01104

Mike Ellis - Principal, Bill Cosgriff - Director

413-787-6998

www.sps.springfield.ma.us